

Session 4 Abomination of Desolation: Understanding the Basics

I. JESUS CALLED US TO SEE THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION

- A. Jesus called His people “to see” the *abomination of desolation* and then pointed us to the book of Daniel to gain understanding of it (Mt. 24:15). Paul and John elaborated on it (2 Thes. 2; Rev. 13). The abomination of desolation is the first event in the Bible that signals the start of the tribulation.

¹⁵“Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), ¹⁶“then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains...²¹then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been...” (Mt. 24:15-16, 21)

*This is session four of **End Times Studies in the Book of Daniel**. It is on the abomination of desolation, understanding all the basics about this very important subject. It is a strange phrase when you hear “abomination of desolation,” if you are not familiar with it. You might think it is confusing, but it is not really very confusing. What it really means in one sentence is that there will be abominations—very evil things. That is “abomination.”—that will lead to desolation, cities being destroyed. What it means is there is this reality of evil that will result in destruction. That is what it means: abomination unto destruction or unto desolation.*

In Matthew 24, Jesus called His people to see this reality and to pay attention to it. He said in verse 15, “When you see the abomination of desolation,” again, for abomination think of something evil, and for desolation, think of destruction. “When you see it”—somebody might wonder what that is. He says, “We are talking about what Daniel the prophet spoke about.” In other words, Jesus says, “You’ve got to go back to Daniel, and you will understand Daniel spoke about it four times.” Daniel is the only prophet besides Jesus who spoke about it using the term abomination of desolation. There is only one other place in the Bible you can find it, the book of Daniel. Jesus said, verse 15, “When you see the abomination spoken of by Daniel the prophet standing in the holy place, then if you live in Judea”—which is the region around Jerusalem—“run to the mountains.” So once you see that abomination standing in the holy place of the temple because the great tribulation is beginning right then.

The abomination of desolation is the first event that the Bible makes clear signals the beginning of the great tribulation. This exhortation of Jesus is often neglected. People have read it over the years and thought, “That is kind of confusing.” It is not confusing. It really is not. I want to remove the mystery and the fog around this very, very important subject.

- B. In Matthew 24 Jesus gave His most detailed teaching on the end times. He mentioned two men that we must understand if we are to view the end times from God’s perspective—**Daniel** and **Noah**. Jesus established His end-time teaching in relation to what happened in their message and ministry.
1. Jesus made three direct references to Daniel’s prophecies: the *abomination of desolation* (Mt. 24:15; Dan. 8:13; 9:27; 11:31; 12:11), the *Great Tribulation* (Mt. 24:21; Dan. 12:1), and the *Son of Man coming on the clouds* (Mt. 24:30; Dan. 7:14).
 2. Jesus compared the people and circumstances in the end times to those *in the days of Noah* (Mt. 24:37-43; Gen. 6-9).

Matthew 24 is the most detailed teaching of Jesus on the end times in the Bible. If you ask anybody, “Where does Jesus teach on the end times the most?” the answer is Matthew 24. In Matthew 24, the main passage of Jesus’ teaching on the end times, He mentions two men. You need to pay attention to these two men and their ministries: Noah and Daniel. The fact that the Lord says, “Go study Daniel,” in essence, “If you want to understand what is going to happen.” is why we take the book of Daniel very seriously, because of this one verse right here. Jesus said, “When you see that happen, this event described by Daniel, you know you are in a very, very serious moment, a very serious time.” It is interesting that Jesus established His end time teaching in relationship to these two men. If you want to understand what Jesus thinks about the end times, study Daniel and what happened in the days of Noah.

- C. Daniel’s “abomination of desolation” is the central event that helps us to understand Jesus’ view of the end times. This is the only specific political and religious event that Jesus identified which will let His people know that they are in the generation of His return and that the Great Tribulation has started. The fact of this event will help them understand other key events that are implied by it.

I am just saying it again. Same point. Jesus made it clear that the abomination of desolation is the central event that helps us understand the negative dimensions of the end times. It is the central event. It is the only political, religious event Jesus talked about that signals the end times, the only one that Jesus spoke about directly.

What the abomination of desolation is, in just one sentence, is the Antichrist putting an image of himself in the temple in Jerusalem. When he puts an image of himself there, it is a statue that is more than an archaic statue. It is a very dynamic image, statue, or idol. I am imagining it is going to be state-of-the-art technology with supernatural dimensions and demonic power being manifest around it. Do not think of some archaic old statue.

When he puts the image of himself in the holy place in the temple, he will say, “Now worship me or I will kill you.” That is what the abomination of desolation is. It is the most abominable thing a man will ever do in history. He will put the statue in the holy place and demand the nations to worship him at the pain of death, and he will have the power to back it up. It is the greatest abomination in history. That is why it is called the abomination.

- D. There are many implications associated with the abomination of desolation. For example, in order for the Antichrist to put an image of himself in the temple in Jerusalem, Israel must first be a nation with Jerusalem under its jurisdiction, and the temple must be built on its original site (the very place of Solomon’s temple), functioning with sacrifices according to the law of Moses.

There are a lot of implications. If the Antichrist is going to put a statue of himself or an image of himself in the temple in Jerusalem, then Israel has to be a nation, they have to have jurisdiction over Jerusalem, and they must build a temple in it. For almost 2000 years the nation of Israel did not have a homeland and therefore did not have jurisdiction over Jerusalem. They could not put a temple there.

Now they have to rebuild the temple. They have to restart sacrifices in that temple. All of that is implied by the phrase “the abomination of desolation.” How can the Antichrist put an image in the temple if there is no temple there? Right now there is not a temple in Jerusalem. It has to be built. For 2000 years this passage really caused a bit of perplexity to Bible teachers and theologians. They thought, “How can he put a statue in the temple of Jerusalem? They don’t even have Jerusalem. They don’t even have a temple there. It is never going to happen.” Beloved, right now there is a big movement to build the temple in Jerusalem. It has to be built. When that temple is built, that will be yet another sign that we are moving in that direction quickly.

The beginning of the great tribulation is when the Antichrist enters into the temple, puts the statue there, and demands the nations worship him. That is the great abomination that triggers everything. Jesus basically said that if you live in Judea, which is the area around Jerusalem, get out of town quickly because the Antichrist is pulling his mask off. He is going to show himself to be not a man of peace. When he does that, he is going to show himself as a man of terror, a man of rage and power and cruelty. Leave quickly when you hear news that that man went into the holy place in Jerusalem.

1. One major obstacle to the temple being rebuilt is that Al-Aqsa Mosque (Islam's third most holy site) and the Dome of the Rock stand on the Temple Mount (site of Solomon's temple). Someone must bring peace to the Middle East before the temple can be rebuilt in Jerusalem.

The big obstacle is the Islamic mosque there on the place. Somehow Jerusalem is going to have a temple on the place where there is an Islamic mosque. That is so—I do not know what the word is—but it is so dramatic worldwide. How is that going to happen? The narrative that most people who believe in literal end-time prophecy embrace is that the Antichrist will show himself as a man of peace. He will bring peace in the Middle East. In the negotiation of peace, he will cause the agreement to allow that temple to be there.

That is going to be really big because that mosque in Jerusalem is the third holiest site in Islam. I think there is no man without supernatural power who is going to make that change. The Lord is orchestrating it. The Antichrist will have demonic powers, but it is God's will. He is going to let it happen. The nations will be just amazed when Jerusalem gets to build a temple there and have a functioning temple again. We do not know how it is going to happen, but it is going to happen. That implies, again, the narrative that he is going to bring peace in the Middle East first. Then he is going to tell the Jewish nation, "Hey, I will give you a temple and let you have daily sacrifices like in the days of Moses."

Israel, the religious community of Israel, will be so excited that they will buy the peace treaty. They will say, "Okay, if you give us that."

2. The Antichrist will make a covenant with many nations that will allow this to take place (Dan. 9:27). Then he will betray the covenant that stop the sacrifices and will seek to force Israel and the nations, under threat of death, to embrace the abominations and worship him. Some see Ezekiel 8-10 as helpful in understanding more about the abomination of desolation.

The problem is that, after a little bit of time, the Antichrist will stop the daily sacrifices and say, "No more sacrifices." He is going to break the covenant. He is going to pull his mask off and show them "I am not a man of peace. I am a man of war. I am a beast. You are not going to offer sacrifices to the God of Israel. You are going to worship me or I am going to kill you." He is going to stop the sacrifices, which means they cannot practice their religion towards the God of Israel in the way they understand it. That is the narrative of what is going on here.

- E. The *abomination of desolation* is referred to eight times in the Bible. Daniel used a form of this phrase four times (8:13; 9:27; 11:31; 12:11), two passages quote Jesus' use of it (Mt. 24:15; Mk. 13:14), and both Paul (2 Thes. 2:3-4) and John (Rev. 13:12-18) described it. We understand the abomination of desolation best by comparing Daniel's four references to it with what Jesus, Paul, and John said about it.

The abomination of desolation is mentioned eight times in the Bible. It is mentioned four times by Daniel, some form of the phrase. Jesus is quoted two times saying the phrase. Then Paul the apostle and John the apostle do not use the phrase, but they describe the reality of the abomination of desolation without actually using the phrase, the abomination of desolation.

II. WHAT IS THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION? A QUICK OVERVIEW

I just want to be super simple and clear. What is the abomination of desolation? I have already said it three or four times. I am going to do my main gift. My main gift is repetition.

- A. The abomination of desolation refers to specific deeds being done that are abominable to God. These deeds lead to the desolation (destruction) of many people and nations. In other words, it speaks of abominations (deeds) that lead to the desolation (destruction) of the nations, etc.

I want to say it just a little bit differently so you say, “I really got it.” The abomination refers to specific deeds, abominable or evil deeds that are done. These deeds are an abomination to God. That is how it gets the term. It is very evil to God. These deeds, these abominable deeds lead to desolation or another word for desolation, they lead to destruction. Destruction of what? Cities, nations, people. There is destruction that is the result of these abominable deeds.

- B. What are these abominable deeds, and what are the desolations that result from them?
- C. The main event emphasized in the New Testament is the setting up the abomination of desolation, i.e. the Antichrist *placing his image in the temple* (2 Thes. 2:3-4; Rev. 13:12-18). The main event emphasized in the Old Testament is the *stopping of the sacrifices* (Dan. 8:13; 9:27; 11:31; 12:11).

When the Bible describes the abomination of desolation, in the New Testament the emphasis is the Antichrist putting his image in the temple. The New Testament mostly develops that idea. The Old Testament does not talk about the image in a direct way. The thing that Daniel emphasized the most, which the angels told Daniel, is that the sacrifices would be stopped. This means this evil leader who showed himself as a man of peace will take his mask off, show himself as a man of war, a cruel man, and he will stop their religious practices to the God of Israel and demand that they worship him as god and forsake the God of Israel. That is what it means when it says he stops the sacrifices. He is telling them, “You cannot do religious practices to the God of Israel. Now you have to worship only me and disregard him.”

This is the bottom line point as the angels told Daniel over and over, “This evil man is going to stop the sacrifices. He is going to interrupt the Jewish religious practice and make them illegal.” That is what it means by stop the sacrifices.

- D. This abomination to God will occur in two ways—each involving several different dynamics.
1. **The demands of the Antichrist:** The Antichrist will **demand** that he be worshiped as God after he sits in the holy place in the temple in Jerusalem and stops the daily sacrifices. He will force others to accept this under the threat of death.
 2. **The responses of the people:** Hundreds of millions of people will **accept** his claims.

The abomination, the evil part, will occur two ways. Number one, the first part of the evil abominable deed is the Antichrist demanding to be worshiped. He says, “I demand it.” God says, “That is an abomination to Me that you demand it.” Number two, the second part of the abomination is that millions of people are going to do it. That is an abomination to God that the masses accept it. Both of them are two aspects of what is abominable or what is evil in God’s eyes.

E. The desolation will occur in two ways—both are related to worshipping the Antichrist.

1. **Antichrist will cause desolation:** He will seek to destroy any **who refuse** to worship him. He will bring desolation to the people, cities, and nations who refuse to worship him.

The desolation, or the destruction is another word you could use for desolation, will occur in two ways. Number one, the Antichrist will cause desolation. He is going to try to destroy anybody that refuses to worship. If a nation refuses, he is going to attack it. If people refuse, he is going to give the mark of the beast and say, "I am going to starve you out. If I catch you, you will be a criminal of the state; I will make it illegal. I will have you executed." He is going to create destruction for anybody, or at least he is going to try to. He is not going to succeed.

As I have said before, and it will be really clear when we get to Daniel 11, the Antichrist wants total world leadership, but he never gets it. He has influence in every nation, but he does not dominate every nation. Even at the very end there are nations resisting him. Even in the last weeks and months there are nations that are resisting him. Not because they love Jesus per se, but they do not want this evil man, just like nations resisted Adolf Hitler, not because they were devout, but because they did not like Adolf Hitler. There will be godly leaders in some of those nations.

That is not my point. My point is this man's evil will be so apparent to so many that nations will be resisting him to the end. He never, ever conquers all the nations even though some people have the idea that all the nations will be under his dominion. He will be influencing, he will be harassing, he will be trying to dominate every nation, but he will not succeed. He will try to cause destruction to whomever refuses to worship him. He will succeed in many places, but not entirely.

2. **God will cause desolation:** God will destroy any **who agree** to worship the Antichrist. He will bring judgment on the people, cities, and nations that worship the Antichrist.

⁹If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. (Rev. 14:9-10)

Number two, destruction comes another place. It is from God. On the people who do agree to worship the Antichrist, God releases judgment. You get the Antichrist judgment if you say no, and you get God's judgment if you say yes to the Antichrist. This will cause desolation all around the world. If you say no, the Antichrist is attacking you with great force. If you say yes, God is coming after you with great force. What? This is intense. That is why it is called the abomination that leads to global destruction. Not that the whole world will be totally destroyed, but the world will be in desolation when it is over.

It is at that time when the great harvest comes to its fullness. I believe the church will be here in power through this time period. I do not believe the popular idea that we are going to be raptured out and watching from heaven. I believe the church will be in the power of God, in the midst of the nations, the great harvest of the nations, the power of signs and wonders taking place, and the church will be purified and have victory. There will be a great falling away, but there will be a great ingathering in the nations with great power. The church will be purified in this context. People who are not sincere will say, "I am tired of this Jesus thing." People who are sincere will walk in deep commitment and purity.

III. THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION: A CLOSER LOOK

- A. John described the abomination of desolation in Revelation 13. Two main components of the abomination of desolation will be the *image of the Beast* and the *mark of the Beast*. These two components *deceive* the multitudes in the nations and *force* them to worship the Antichrist.

¹⁵He [False Prophet] was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. ¹⁶He causes all...to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, ¹⁷and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark... (Rev. 13:15-18)

Let's look at the abomination of desolation in a little bit more detail now. We have given the broad strokes. Let's go to John in the book of Revelation. John gives the most detail of the abomination of desolation in Revelation 13. Daniel says the term the most, but John gives the most information about it with a lot of detail here.

There are two components to setting up the abomination of desolation. That is the term the angel told Daniel. The abomination will be "set up." It will be established, and there will be a worldwide infrastructure that needs to be set up for this abomination to be established. There will be two components. They are very familiar in the church today. Component number one is the image of the beast, which is the statue. Component number two is the mark of the beast, which is the mark that forbids people to get the necessities of life if they do not take the mark. They do not get electricity, they do not get fuel, they do not get water, or whatever; that is the idea.

Again, the Antichrist does not succeed. He enforces this in a lot of places, but many escape his grasp. That is his goal: that nobody can buy or sell in the open market. God has ways of provision and all kinds of things will be happening that are just not the open market. Just like in WWII. There were all kinds of markets going on and all kinds of activity not officially endorsed by the Nazi state.

We know the passage well, but let's just read it. Revelation 13:15, "He"—the false prophet—"was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast." The beast in the book of Revelation is the Antichrist. He is mentioned thirty-six times as the beast. John the apostle calls him the Antichrist in the epistle of 1 John. He calls him the Antichrist in 1 John 2:18. In the book of Revelation John never uses that name. He calls him the beast thirty-six times. The reason he calls him the beast is that this man will be impossible to reason with. His cruelty will have no boundaries to it. You cannot reason with him. He has no capacity for mercy at all.

The point here in verse 15 is that the false prophet will have supernatural, demonic power to give breath to a statue. Again, do not think of an archaic statue. I think—this is just a conjecture—my guess is it is a hologram of the highest state of technology beyond what we are thinking of now that has demonic power to it that looks as real as the man standing there. That is a guess. This image is a statue plus some. Statue is not an adequate word. It is more than a statue. It will breathe. Like, "Wow, that is intense. How is that statue breathing?" There will be demonic power. The statue will speak, not just by the power of computer. It will speak in a supernatural way. What that statue will say will be very, very powerful and convincing. The beast image will speak and breathe.

The false prophet at the end of verse 15 creates legislation—again he is trying to make it worldwide. It does not take everywhere. There is an expression of it, a presence of this activity in all the nations. It does influence every nation, at least some in each nation, but it dominates many nations, though not all nations—the false prophet will use legislation and create a legal code or system so that if you do not worship that image, you will be killed. My theory is that this statue—again statue plus some, plus a whole lot more, this hologram-technology/statue breathing, speaking, demonically empowered image in Jerusalem—my guess, purely a guess,

is that it will be connected to similar holograms in Antichrist worship sanctuaries all over the earth. I have this idea that these other worship sanctuaries will be in the remote places, not every place literally, but in the countries of the earth, and this religion will spread out. The people will go to the local sanctuary, and it will be connected spiritually by demonic power and probably via technology. I do not know. I am getting out there because I do not know the details. My idea is there will be a global unity in it that will be convincing and prevailing. It will be very, very powerful.

In verse 16 is the second component of the mark of the beast. You understand that they put a mark on the right hand or the forehead. In verse 17, you cannot buy the necessities of life without it. If you do not have that mark you cannot buy on the open market. I believe this will be the hour where there will be supernatural provision, like when Jesus did the miracle of multiplying the bread and the loaves and the fish. Not just the same story repeated, but separate miracles of multiplying of bread. That is one of the main miracles that Jesus emphasized in His first coming. I believe that is insight into His leadership in the time of the Antichrist.

It will be like the children of Israel under Moses when Pharaoh was coming against them. The children of Israel were in a place called Goshen. You can read about it in the book of Exodus. The judgments came on Egypt, but they did not come on Goshen. The children of Israel were protected from the judgments. The saints will be protected from God's judgments. I believe there will be supernatural provision. Yet there will still be martyrdom. It will be a very, very dramatic time.

1. **Image of the Beast:** An image of the Antichrist will be placed in the holy place of the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem. The False Prophet will deceive many by making it breathe and talk.

The image of the beast, this statue plus some, is placed in the rebuilt temple. Currently, the temple is not rebuilt yet. There is a strong movement in Israel, however. They want to build that temple in Jerusalem right now. They want to build it on that site next to that mosque, or some people say in place of the mosque. I do not know. There is a lot of debate. Is it next to the mosque? Do they replace the mosque? Do they work together? Who knows? I do not know. We know this. The image will be placed in that rebuilt temple.

- a. The "image of the Beast" is one of the most significant biblical signs of the end times. John emphasized it ten times (Rev. 13:14, 15 [3x]; 14:9, 11; 15:2; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4).

This is interesting, and I want you to notice this. The image of the beast is a phrase that is emphasized ten times. There are very few things in end-time prophecy that are emphasized ten times. In the book of Revelation there are only a couple things that are mentioned over and over. The image of the beast, though I have not actually counted and compared it with several other things, is certainly near the very top of the list if not the most emphasized prophetic item. For it to be mentioned ten times in the book of Revelation tells you it has tremendous significance in its importance in God's end-time purpose and plan. He is going to let this happen. At the end of the day this is going to purify the church. It is going to make everybody decide. The church is going to be walking in purity, unity, and power. The great harvest will come in at that time as well.

- b. This image will be the greatest abomination in history because it will deceive untold millions into worshipping the Antichrist.
- c. The image may combine cutting-edge technology (holograms?) and supernatural demonic elements, causing this image to breathe and speak. There may be a global network of statues (holograms?) in local "worship sanctuaries" connected to the temple.

2. **Mark of the Beast:** The mark will be a part of the abomination of desolation (Rev. 13:16-17). It will be illegal to refuse the mark; those refusing it will not be allowed to buy or sell and will be seen as dangerous criminals of the state, guilty of death. I believe it will involve more than receiving something like an embedded chip, but also covenanting to worship the Antichrist.

Most of you are familiar with the mark of the beast. It will be illegal to refuse it. The people who refuse it will be seen as criminals of the state. Some people get nervous about the mark of the beast, and they think, "What if I fall asleep, and my friends just give me the mark, and I wake up, 'Oh no! I got the mark. Oh no, I am doomed!'" No, it does not work that way.

The point of the mark is, in essence, that they have made a covenant to worship the Antichrist, an intelligent decision. They did not fall asleep one day and somebody put a tattoo on their hand and now they got it. They made a covenant. You can go to bed, fall asleep, and somebody can put a wedding ring on your hand, but you do not wake up married the next day, "Oh no! I am married!" No, no, just take the ring off. It was a joke. You are okay. Do not worry about being tricked.

Some people say, "An imbedded chip. That is it." No, not an embedded chip. The mark may consist of technology like that, but the technology itself is not the mark. Like somebody says, "So-and-so got an embedded chip for a medical reason; that is the mark."

I respond, "No, they did not make a covenant to worship the Antichrist. The Antichrist is not on the world stage right now. No one knows who he is. Do not worry. If they gave you an embedded chip, you are fine." I mean in terms of the Antichrist. You might have some other little storyline going on. Anyway, I am getting way out there.

- B. Paul described the abomination of desolation in 2 Thessalonians 2.

³Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day [Jesus' return] will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin [Antichrist] is revealed, the son of perdition,

⁴who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God [associated with God] or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God...

⁹The coming of the lawless one [Antichrist] is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders... (2 Thes. 2:3-9)

Paul described the abomination of desolation in 2 Thessalonians 2. We just looked at how John described it in Revelation 13. Now we are seeing how Paul described it. Neither John nor Paul actually uses the phrase abomination, but they described the events that are associated with it. 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, "Let no one deceive you by any means. The day of the Lord"—the second coming of Christ—"will not come until two things happen. The falling away comes first and the man of sin"—that is the Antichrist, that is Paul's name of the Antichrist—"is revealed"—on the world stage. Verse 4, "This man of sin will exalt himself above everything that is associated with God." Whatever is associated with God in any religion of the world, he will preempt it with his own legislation. He will say, "That is illegal. I am the only one. Anything that is called God or associated with it must be gotten rid of." This is not a religion of tolerance. It is a religion of total absolute. You can only worship him.

Paul goes on and describes it clearly in verse 4, "He sits as God in the temple of God." This is almost 2000 years ago and the temple in Jerusalem had not yet been destroyed. This is about approximately AD 50. The temple was destroyed twenty years after, not exactly twenty, maybe eighteen or nineteen years after Paul wrote this. Call it about twenty years after Paul wrote it. The temple was still functioning in Jerusalem. I do not think the Jews at that time were aware the temple was going to be destroyed. In AD 70 the Romans came in and

destroyed it. For 2000 years there has not been one. Paul is looking past the temple being destroyed twenty years after he gave this prophecy. He is looking at the end of the age, and it is rebuilt. The Antichrist sits in the holy place and says, "I am God." He sits there himself and then his image, his statue, his hologram plus, whatever it is. Again, I am not sure that is what it will be, but I think it is something with the highest technology with supernatural, demonic power being manifest in it as well. Verse 9 talks about the power dimension that is involved.

- C. **Summary:** The great abomination will include the Antichrist claiming to be God and forcing the nations, by state law and with state resources, to worship him as God, under the penalty of death. This will be the greatest abomination to God in history, yet it will be the Church's greatest hour.

IV. THE MAGNITUDE OF THE DESOLATION

- A. Jesus referred to Daniel's teaching on the abomination of desolation and the Great Tribulation.

¹⁵ "...when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' ...¹⁶ let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains...²¹ There will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time...²² And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved [from physical death]; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened." (Mt. 24:15-22)

Let's look at the magnitude of this desolation, of this destruction. This is not a mild disruption. WWII was the most dramatic, widespread destruction in human history besides the flood, but WWII had so many more people. Fifty million people died in six years in WWII. That number is beyond what we can grasp. Fifty million people died in six years from 1939 to 1945. Fifty million. The year before, most people did not imagine they were a moment away from the most dramatic death toll and crisis in human history that was about to come on them.

The desolation of the great tribulation will far surpass even WWII. It is staggering. Jesus said in Matthew 24:15, let's read the passage again, "When you see the abomination of desolation"—when a man puts a statue of himself in the Jerusalem temple and sits there and says, "I am God"—verse 16, "If you live in Judea"—the geographic area, that twenty or thirty mile area around Jerusalem—"leave." When he sits in that temple, he is pulling his mask off. He is not the man of peace anymore. He is going to show his true colors. He is going to show them that day. Leave. Do not even go pack your bags. Take off running right there because he is coming after the Jewish people that day.

He goes on in verse 21, "There will be great tribulation such as has never been seen since the beginning of the world until this time and never any time afterwards." This will surpass WWII. This will be a time of trouble surpassing any time in history. As a matter of fact, it is so dramatic that "unless those days were shortened," because it only lasts three and a half years. WWII lasted six years. This is cut short in God's plan to only three and a half years. Jesus said, "If it was not cut short," because most wars and conflicts go on longer than three and a half years. He said, "Unless it were cut short, no flesh would be saved." When it says no flesh would be saved, it means nobody would live physically. He is not talking about people being born again right here. He says, "Nobody would make it. Everybody on the earth would die."

I look at verse 22 and I say, "Jesus, You are not exaggerating."

"No, I am not exaggerating." I did not really hear Him say that. That is an intense statement. There will be so much death in three and a half years that if it would have stretched out for ten or twenty years like some wars do, nobody would live. That is how fierce it will be.

B. **Tribulation:** Jesus referenced what an angel told Daniel about unprecedented trouble.

¹***“At that time...there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered...” (Dan. 12:1)***

Notice when Jesus talks about the great tribulation, He is actually quoting Daniel. He is quoting Daniel 12. In Daniel 12, the angel told Daniel, “At that time there will be trouble such as there never was.” Daniel lived about 500 BC, about, a little bit more than that, but that is a ballpark number. Five hundred years later Jesus is quoting Daniel right here. Basically He says, “Hey, Daniel was right. What the angel told Daniel is right. I am backing it up.”

C. **No flesh saved:** Jesus elaborated on Daniel 12:1 by clarifying that if the tribulation lasted longer than 3½ years no one would be saved from physical death, but all would be killed by the Antichrist’s rage or by God’s judgment. These 3½ years will threaten the lives of many.

¹⁵***The four angels...were released to kill a third of mankind. (Rev. 9:15)***

³³***The slain of the LORD shall be from one end of the earth to the other... (Jer. 25:33)***

¹***The LORD makes the earth empty [of people]...³The land shall be entirely emptied...***

⁶***The inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left. (Isa. 24:1-6)***

Jesus went on and said, essentially, “I am going to tell you more than what Daniel told you. Daniel said it would be the worst time ever. I am going to break it down and give you a little more detail. Nobody would survive if it were not cut short, if it were not limited to the three and a half years.” Look at some of the verses that describe the death toll of the destruction. Again, some of this destruction is the rage of the Antichrist against people who refuse him. Some of this destruction is the judgment of God on the Antichrist and the people who support and embrace him.

Revelation 9:15, “Four angels were released to kill a third of the earth.” Can you imagine a third of the earth? If there are six billion people, a third of the earth is two billion people, if the number were six. That is just staggering. That is a staggering amount.

In Jeremiah 25:33, Jeremiah said, “The slain of the Lord”—these are those who worship the Antichrist. They are the ones slain by God—will be from one end of the earth to the other.” These are the Antichrist worshippers.

Look at what Isaiah said in chapter 24, “The Lord will make the earth empty.” Isaiah 24 is really intense by the way. You read that and it will make you very sober. He said, “The land will be entirely emptied. The inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few people are left.” It could be tens of millions. It could be hundreds of millions. Compared to billions, compared to maybe eight or ten billion, I mean we do not know when all this is going to transpire. It could be a few decades down the road. It could be sooner. It could be a little bit further down the road than that. We know things are escalating. It is my opinion, as I have said over the years—it is not a prophecy and I could be wrong—it is my opinion: I think there are people alive on the earth who will see it. It may be the two-year olds, I do not know. If not, I think it will be their children or their grandchildren. I think it is reasonable because of the escalation of the biblical signs of the times that it really could be people alive on the earth now, even though it might be the really young ones. It could be you. You do not know, though. Things could pick up so fast.

V. THE END-TIME HARVEST

- A. “Therefore” in verse 15 points back to the gospel being preached to all nations in verse 14. There is a dynamic relationship between the gospel being preached in power to all nations and the setting up of the abomination of desolation (with its escalating martyrdom and deception). We can easily overlook the “therefore” in verse 15 and not tie it to verse 14.

¹⁴“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come. ¹⁵Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel...standing in the holy place...” (Mt. 24:14-15)

I want you to notice the relationship of verse 14 and verse 15 in Matthew 24. In verse 14 Jesus says, “The gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all nations as a witness to all the nations.” Notice verse 15, “Therefore.” That word is like one preacher said, “When you see the word, therefore, ask what is it there for?” Verse 15 is tied to verse 14. It is easy to read verse 15 and ignore the word therefore. Here is the point. The setting up of the abomination of desolation and the power for the gospel to be preached in all nations are dynamically connected to each other. The abomination is set up as the gospel is being preached in all nations. There is going to be a power dimension in the church because there is going to be a demonic increase of occult power and persecution. The spirit of glory on the church will increase in a dynamic way as well.

- B. God will release great power to believers to bring in the harvest in the context of exposing the Antichrist’s deception and overcoming his persecutions, as seen throughout Matthew 24.

God will release great power in context to exposing the Antichrist deception. Hundreds of millions, billions—I do not know. Nobody knows the number—let’s just say a couple billion people will be deceived by the Antichrist. God is going to raise up prophetic believers in power to expose that deception. Not only is the power of God going to expose the deception, there is going to be the power of God to overcome the persecution. Some believers will be supernaturally delivered from the persecution, and they will escape supernaturally. Others by the power of God will go through the persecution, and they will not love their lives even unto death. They will love Jesus more than they love their own life. They will overcome the Antichrist by not flinching or drawing back even in the face of death. Their love for Jesus will be magnified and seen as a witness.

- C. Many will be deceived by the Antichrist—even some who profess Christ will fall away. The falling away and the revealing of the Antichrist on the world stage are the two signs that Paul said should alert the church to the nearness of the Day of the Lord and Jesus’ return.

³Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin [Antichrist] is revealed, the son of perdition... (2 Thes. 2:3)

Notice this. Many will be deceived at that time. Paul says in verse 3, “Let no one deceive you. Let no one deceive you for the Day”—and the Day here speaks of the second coming of Christ—“will not come until the falling away comes first and the man of sin”—the Antichrist—“is revealed” on the world stage. Paul identifies two things that are the signs of the times. Jesus identified the abomination of desolation. Paul says, basically, “There are two things that will happen on a global level that, when you see them, will be unmistakable. There will be a falling away of the faith.” This is not a trickling, just a little trickle. It will be so dramatic that it will be as dynamic of a sign as the Antichrist appearing on the world stage. Beloved, we are watching that beginning right now with this whole new approach to Christianity even in the last five or ten years. The embracing of an approach to Christianity that undermines the authority of Scripture and that is dismissing

God's moral standards of His kingdom. Lots of churches are buying into this even right now. In the last ten years it has been growing so fast. Leaders in the body of Christ are alarmed because they have never seen anything like this. That falling away is going to increase, but the ingathering of the harvest is going to increase too.

VI. DANIEL'S PROPHECIES ABOUT THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION

- A. The abomination of desolation was referred to four times by Daniel (8:13; 9:27; 11:31; 12:11). We will understand it best by comparing these references with what Jesus, Paul, and John said.

Let's look at Daniel's prophecies about the abomination of desolation. We are not going to cover too much more on the notes here. I am just going to give you a little bit of a framework, a little overview of what is in the notes so you can read them on your own if you want to. I am breaking down some of the details of the abomination of desolation, giving a little bit of detail in the book of Daniel. Why? Because the passage we have read repeatedly tonight, Matthew 24:15, where Jesus said, "When you see the abomination, yes the one Daniel talked about." Remember Daniel is the only one who used the term in the whole Bible besides Jesus. It is important that we go back to Daniel and see what the angels told Daniel. We know John said it is the mark of the beast, the image of the beast. Paul said that it is a man sitting in the temple demanding to be worshiped. We go back to the angels that visited Daniel in his four visions in his latter years of his life, these four end-time visions, and the abomination of desolation is mentioned again four different times. We understand the abomination best when we take these four passages in Daniel and compare them to what Jesus said, Paul said, and John said. I have all the verses right here in the notes. You put them together. You can get a pretty clear, broad picture of what the Bible says about the abomination of desolation.

- B. The abomination of desolation will need to be "set up." A whole "system" will need to be set up. This system will involve setting up an image of the Antichrist in the temple, removing the daily sacrifices, and setting up a worldwide infrastructure to enforce Antichrist worship (Rev. 14:9-11).

¹¹From the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days [1,290 days]. (Dan. 12:11)

In Daniel 12 it tells us, "From the time the daily sacrifice is taken away." That is in the temple. The Jewish nation will be engaged in the sacrifices of the Jewish religion that Moses set up in the Old Testament. The Antichrist is going to give them that liberty when they first start the temple. They think, "Things are great. We got the temple. We got the sacrifices."

One day he is going to break his covenant. He is going to say, "Stop the sacrifices."

They are going to say, "Stop them? What do you mean? That was part of the deal."

He will say, "No, I lied to you. You cannot seek the God of Israel."

Now, Jesus already offered Himself. There are no sacrifices that please the God of Israel. The fact that this is unsaved Jews offering it, God is not accepting these sacrifices. Some people read it and think, "Wow, these sacrifices are amazing." No. They are only an expression that the Jewish nation is trying to respond to the God of Israel in an Old Testament way. They have to come through Jesus to get saved. Some people get mixed up. They say, "Wow, the Jewish sacrifices. If they get those going, I want to be a part of it." No, no. Jesus died. There is no sacrifice that God wants. That is not what Daniel is saying. He is telling us that the Jewish nation is going to resurrect the Old Testament religion, not that God is pleased with it, but God is going to allow it.

The Antichrist is going to stop the daily sacrifices. He is going to say, “No. I forbid you to do the Jewish religion here.”

They will say, “Wait. You said we could.”

He goes, “No. I lied. I tricked you.” He will respond that the sacrifices will be taken away and the abomination will be set up. Notice that phrase. It is set up. That is an interesting term. It is set up. This system will involve setting up the image of the Antichrist. It will involve removing the sacrifices that have been functioning for a little while. There will be a worldwide infrastructure. The abomination of desolation, though it will happen in Jerusalem, I believe will be connected to local Antichrist worship sanctuaries all around the earth. The setting up of this abomination has an infrastructure. It is going to be a very observable thing when it is set up. That is an interesting term the angel gave Daniel. This thing will be set up – the image and I believe the global infrastructure linked into the image. That is what I believe it means. I give a little bit more of the detail here.

1. Paul elaborated on the abomination being “set up,” explaining that *a man will sit* in the temple declaring to be God (2 Thes. 2:3). John described *an image* being “set up” (Rev. 13:14-18).

³...that Day will not come unless...the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, ⁴...so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. (2 Thes. 2:3-4)

2. Jesus insisted that something will be “standing” in the holy place but without telling us if it was *a man* or *an image*. Some say that this was all fulfilled in AD 70 when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem. However, the Romans did not “set” an idol or anything else in the holy place in AD 70; rather, they tore down the holy place and burned it with fire.

¹⁵“...when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’...standing in the holy place”... (Mt. 24:15)

¹⁴“...when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’...standing where it ought not...” (Mk. 13:14)

Jesus said, “When you see the abomination of desolation standing.” What do You mean? The angel told Daniel that the abomination will be set up. Here Jesus says the abomination will be standing. Jesus is now referring to that image in the temple that He revealed to John, the image of the beast.

- C. The Antichrist’s armies will “place there,” in the temple, the Antichrist’s image (11:31). Of the four passages where Daniel mentioned the abomination, he gave the most information on it in Daniel 11.

³¹“They shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation...

³²But the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits [miracles].

³³And those of the people who understand shall instruct many...³⁴Now when they fall [martyrdom], they shall be aided with a little help...³⁵And some of those of understanding shall fall [martyrdom], to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time.” (Dan. 11:31-35)

What I have here is the four phrases of the abomination in the book of Daniel. Each one of them has a different description. One says the abomination is set up. Another time it says the abomination of desolation will be placed there. Another time it talks about the transgression of desolation. It has different verbs describing it. I broke those down a little bit. That is a bit more than we need to cover in this study right here.

I am going to make another point or two from Daniel 11:31-35. This is Daniel's most detailed description of the abomination of desolation. I want you to notice how many things the angel told Daniel are associated with the abomination. I want you to read these. You are going to notice seven different themes here, though I will not break them down or cover them all. I want you to know this Daniel 11 passage is really a big one in the Old Testament for the abomination.

Verse 31, "They shall take away the daily sacrifices and they shall place there the abomination." The abomination is placed in the temple there in Jerusalem. "But the people who know their God will carry out great exploits." The people of God will be operating in the miracle power of the Holy Spirit. They will be doing great miracles. The people of God will be present on the earth at that time.

Verse 33, "The people of understanding"—the believers who understand Daniel—"will be teaching multitudes." There will be believers and unbelievers alike who want to understand this. I believe it is time for believers to start understanding this. Beloved, you want to be among those. Your children or grandchildren, whatever the timing is, you want them to be associated with being a person of understanding. You want your family and friends and the ones you are discipling to be people of understanding. I do not want to be confused if I see this in my lifetime, "I do not know what is going on." No. I get what the storyline is.

Verse 34, "They will fall"—even these men and women of understanding—"They will fall." That does not mean they will sin. It means they will be martyred. "And some of the people of understanding will be martyred, but God will refined and purify and make white the people of God." This is the time of the church being purified.

- D. Daniel 11:31-35 connects the activities concerning the abomination of desolation to operating in God's power, receiving the spirit of revelation, and more. Notice seven themes that are brought together in five verses—the abomination of desolation (11:31), knowing God (11:32a), doing miracles (11:32b), receiving understanding (11:33a), reaching many in the harvest (11:33b), receiving supernatural help in persecution (11:34), and being brought to maturity (11:35).

You can read this. I break it down in a little bit more detail there. You can look at the rest of these notes here. Just study it and get familiar with this thing that Jesus said, "The abomination of desolation, when you see it, when you see it, the one that Daniel prophesied it that I want you to know the great tribulation has started." We want to be aware. Jesus told us to see and understand this part of end-time prophecy. Amen.

- E. Gabriel urged Daniel to search out and understand the vision concerning the seventy weeks and the abomination of desolation (9:23-27). Here he gave more insight about the abomination of desolation—he revealed that it is *not only an image* that is set up in the temple, but it involves a *person*, the Antichrist, "one who makes desolate" (9:27). Paul referred to this person (2 Thes. 2:4).

²³"Therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision... ²⁵Know therefore and understand... ²⁷In the middle of the week he [Antichrist] shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate..." (Dan. 9:23-27)

- F. Daniel gave four details that give us insight into what the Antichrist will do. He will defile the temple by *removing the daily sacrifices, trampling the sanctuary, trampling the host, and committing the transgression*" by setting up the abomination resulting in the desolation of nations.

¹³I heard a holy one 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?”¹⁴ He said to me, “For two thousand three hundred days [2,300 days]; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed.” (Dan. 8:13-14)

- G. The sanctuary will eventually be cleansed 2,300 days later (at the time Jesus returns).
- H. The abomination of desolation cannot occur until Israel rebuilds the temple and offers daily sacrifices. Scripture makes it clear that the temple will be rebuilt and sacrifices will occur (Dan. 9:26, 27; 11:31; 12:11; Mt. 24:15; Mk. 13:14; 2 Thes. 2:4; Rev. 11:1-2; 13:12-18).
- I. Even now, plans to rebuild the temple (Third Temple) are being aggressively pursued in Israel.
- J. The Third Temple is not the same as the Millennial Temple. Two distinct temples in Jerusalem are prophesied in Scripture, what some call the Tribulation Temple (Third Temple), which will be built by unbelieving Jews and then desecrated by the Antichrist, and the Millennial Temple.
- K. The Millennial Temple will be built by Jesus (Isa. 2:3; 60:6, 10, 13; Ezek. 37:26-28; 40-48; Zech. 2:11; 6:12-15; 14:16-21).

VII. REMOVING THE SACRIFICES

- A. There are six verses in Daniel that give us information into the daily sacrifices being removed (Dan. 8:11, 12, 13; 9:27; 11:31; 12:11). When these six verses are considered together (letting Scripture interpret Scripture), then we can see more clearly the purpose that God intended to be understood related to “taking away” or “bringing an end to” the daily sacrifices in the end times.
- B. In each passage in which the abomination occurs, a man “takes the sacrifices away.” This is an evil man who exalts himself, seeking to rival Jesus the Prince (8:11); he casts truth down (8:12); he tramples underfoot the temple (8:13); he confirms a deceitful covenant (9:27); he leads forces that defile the temple and place the abomination of desolation in the temple (11:31); he takes the sacrifices away and sets up the abomination of desolation for 1,290 days (12:11).

¹¹He exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away...¹²an army was given...to oppose the daily sacrifices; and he cast truth down to the ground...¹³concerning the daily sacrifices and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled underfoot?” (Dan. 8:11–13)

²⁷Then he shall confirm a covenant...he shall bring an end to sacrifice... (Dan. 9:27)

³¹And forces shall be mustered by him...then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation. (Dan. 11:31)

¹¹“And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days [1,290 days].” (Dan. 12:11)

VIII. WHY THE PRINCE IN DANIEL 9:27 IS NOT JESUS

- A. Some isolate the abomination and the removing of the sacrifices in Daniel 9:27 from their definition throughout the book of Daniel. Thus they wrongly conclude that Jesus is making the covenant and stopping the sacrifices. The context in Daniel is of an evil man removing sacrifices and setting up an abomination in the temple (8:11, 12, 13; 9:27; 11:31; 12:11).
- ²⁷***“Then he [Antichrist] shall confirm a covenant with many [nations] for one week [7 years]; but in the middle of the week [3½ years] he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one [Antichrist] who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate [Antichrist].” (Dan. 9:27)***
- B. Jesus did not make a seven-year covenant, but an eternal covenant. Jesus pointed to this passage as a key sign of Great Tribulation and His coming (Mt. 24:15, 21). The clear antecedent of “he” is “the prince that shall come” (9:26), not Titus, Antiochus, or Jesus.
- C. Jesus did not stop sacrifices “in the middle of the week” (a seven-year period); the Roman army stopped the sacrifices forty years later in AD 70. Yes, Jesus made them invalid in a spiritual way, but He did not stop them in the temple as the text demands. The sacrifices are taken away for 1,290 days in the end times (12:11). The “consummation” of God’s judgment being “poured out on the desolate” does not have an historical fulfillment in Titus after he destroyed Jerusalem in AD 70.