



## Mark 13:14-23\_The Abomination of Desolation

February 10, 2013

### **Text: Mark 13:14-18**

#### *Synoptic Readings:*

*Mat 24:15-20 ESV "So when you see the **abomination of desolation** spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), (16) then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. (17) Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, (18) and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. (19) And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! (20) Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath.*

*Luk 21:20-24 ESV "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its **desolation** has come near. (21) Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are inside the city depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter it, (22) for these are days of vengeance, to fulfill all that is written. (23) Alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! For there will be great distress upon the earth and wrath against this people. (24) They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.*

#### **Initial Thoughts:**

1. As we said last week, the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24-25, Mark 13, etc.) has been used by many in an attempt to discredit our Lord.
2. The argument normally goes like this: "See, Jesus said all these things would happen with the generation He was talking to, and they didn't! He's a false prophet! Your Bible is wrong!"
3. But we have discovered that our Lord was as accurate as always. All that is required is a reading of the text...in context. Trying to interpret Scripture with a newspaper almost always results in guessing.
4. And let me make this clear: truth matters. Ideas have consequences. People have literally rejected Christ and Christianity because of current teaching models concerning the verses we are reading in Mark 13 and
5. 24.

#### **But first, what is an "abomination?"**

1. I thought it would be helpful to define this word as it is used in Scripture.
2. According to Vines Expository Dictionary, the word in Hebrew literally means "a loathsome, detestable thing." Whatever it describes would be "repulsive" to another individual.
3. "When used with reference to God, the word describes people, things, acts, relationships, and characteristics that are detestable to Him because they are contrary to His nature."
  - a. *Lev 18:21-22 ESV You shall not give any of your children to offer them to Molech, and so profane the name of your God: I am the LORD. (22) You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.*
  - b. *Deu 18:9-12 ESV "When you come into the land that the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominable practices of those nations. (10) There shall not be found among you anyone who burns his son or his daughter as an offering, anyone who practices divination or tells fortunes or interprets omens, or a sorcerer (11) or a charmer or a medium or a necromancer or one who inquires of the dead, (12) for whoever does these*

*things is an abomination to the LORD. And because of these abominations the LORD your God is driving them out before you.*

- c. *Deu 22:5 ESV "A woman shall not wear a man's garment, nor shall a man put on a woman's cloak, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the LORD your God.*
  - d. *Deu 25:15-16 ESV A full and fair weight you shall have, a full and fair measure you shall have, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. (16) For all who do such things, all who act dishonestly, are an abomination to the LORD your God.*
4. Gary Demar in his book, *Last Days Madness*, describes a abomination in the Old Testament as "related to desecrating worship, either by outright false worship or by profaning true worship:"
    - a. False worship: *Deu 7:25 ESV The carved images of their gods you shall burn with fire. You shall not covet the silver or the gold that is on them or take it for yourselves, lest you be ensnared by it, for it is an abomination to the LORD your God.*
    - b. False worship: *Deu 27:15 ESV "'Cursed be the man who makes a carved or cast metal image, an abomination to the LORD, a thing made by the hands of a craftsman, and sets it up in secret.' And all the people shall answer and say, 'Amen.'*
    - c. Profaning true worship: *Deu 17:1 ESV "You shall not sacrifice to the LORD your God an ox or a sheep in which is a blemish, any defect whatever, for that is an abomination to the LORD your God.*
  5. So then an abomination is something, someone, or some act that is detestable, repugnant, abhorrent, loathsome, and revolting. Get the picture? ☺

### **Daniel's Prophecy**

1. In Matthew 24:15, our Lord mentions Daniel's prophecy:
  - a. *Dan 9:27 ESV And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator."*
  - b. *Dan 11:31 ESV Forces from him shall appear and profane the temple and fortress, and shall take away the regular burnt offering. And they shall set up the abomination that makes desolate.*
  - c. *Dan 12:11 ESV And from the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1,290 days.*
2. At this point, it is very tempting to invent a very elaborate interpretation as to what Christ meant in relation to Daniel. But let's do the same thing we did last week; let's stay in context...
3. Again, check the pronoun in Mark 13:14: "...when YOU see...." Who was Christ talking to? The people right in front of Him! ☺
4. Are there any "time texts" to help us know when all this stuff would occur?
  - a. Matthew helps us out: *Mat 24:34 ESV Truly, I say to you, **this** generation will not pass away until all these things take place.*
  - b. Mark too! *Mar 13:30 ESV Truly, I say to you, **this** generation will not pass away until all these things take place.*
  - c. So does Luke by the way: *Luk 21:20 ESV "But when **you** see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near.*
5. In other words, whatever the Abomination of Desolation was, its fore-fulfillment would happen to the generation listening to the Olivet Discourse!
6. Again, we aren't trying to draw hard lines against a futurist or a dispensational view; we are simply establishing a firm, solid, contextual view which is what a good bible student must do.
7. Anyway, back to Daniel....

- a. Many theologians and pastors (including me) see a fulfillment of Daniel’s prophecy in 167 BC.
- b. A Greek ruler named Antiochus Epiphanies “took Jerusalem by force, abolished the temple sacrifices, erected an abominable altar to Zeus Olympus, and violated the Jewish covenant by outlawing the Sabbath observance.” –Hank Hanegraaf, *The Apocalypse Code*
- c. Epiphanies, a type of antichrist, literally desecrated the temple fortress and splattered pigs blood (an unclean animal for a Jew, Lev 11:7) on the altar! He forbade possession of the Scriptures and circumcision under pain of death!
- d. Were it not for the intervention of a man named Judas Maccabaeus, whose forces defeated Epiphanies, the Temple might have been destroyed.
- e. This event is chronicled in the non-canonical Book of 1 Maccabees, where it is connected directly to the Abomination of Desolation:

“57 On the fifteenth day of the month Casleu, in the hundred and forty-fifth year, King Antiochus set up the **abominable idol of desolation** upon the altar of God, and they built altars throughout all the cities of Juda round about: 58 And they burnt incense, and sacrificed at the doors of the houses, and in the streets. 59 And they cut in pieces, and burnt with fire the books of the law of God: 60 And every one with whom the books of the testament of the Lord were found, and whosoever observed the law of the Lord, they put to death, according to the edict of the king.” (1 Maccabees 1:57-60)

- f. In fact, the celebration of Hanukkah (or the Festival of Lights) for the Jewish person is a remembrance of this event and the rededication of the Temple after such a desecration.
- g. So when Jesus mentions an event of this magnitude would again come in the \_\_\_\_\_ - future (within a generation), every Jew listening would be immediately familiar with its horror.

### **So what is the Abomination of Desolation?**

1. There are several views of events within our time texts that would fit. Again, we aren’t attempting to be overly dogmatic. (And again, Christians can lovingly disagree and it’s ok.)
  - a. Remember the context, who He was talking to, the time texts, and the fact that the “reader would understand.”
2. My personal view: I think the view of the Romans’ desecration of the temple in 70AD fits the context to a T.
3. As we read two weeks ago, the Romans killed, pillaged, and burned the Temple. (Please refer to the Jan 27 notes)
  - a. According to Josephus the historian, “And now the Romans upon the flight of the seditious into the city, and upon the burning of the holy house itself, and all of the buildings lying round about it, brought their ensigns to the temple, and set them over against its ester gate; and there did they offer sacrifices to them and there did they make Titus imperator, with the greatest acclamations of joy.”
  - b. Roman ensigns (or a flag-type standard that bore a picture of Caesar and of an eagle) were worshipped by soldiers. They were brought inside the temple courts and worshipped (an abomination).
  - c. Let’s not forget that Titus himself stood in the Holy Place (“where he ought not to be,” Mark 13:14) according to Josephus: “When Caesar failed to restrain the fury of his frenzied soldiers, and the fire could not be checked, he entered the building with his generals and looked at the holy place of the sanctuary and all its furnishings, which exceeded by far the accounts current in foreign lands and fully justified their splendid repute in our own.”

4. So at a minimum, we can say it is plausible that the fore-future fulfillment predicated by Christ indeed occurred in 70AD in the desecration of the Temple by the Romans.
5. This tragedy was eerily similar to that perpetrated by Antiochus Epiphanes, but this time no Judas Maccabeus intervened. Blood was everywhere, as was fire and death.

### **Thoughts on the Rest of the Text:**

#### **Verses 15-16**

1. These verses remind one of the flight of Lot from Sodom. The condemned and wicked city was going to be destroyed. Get out! Don't look back, go back, or worry about what was left. Get out! The abominations of the city would finally be judged! (Genesis 18-19)
2. Let us not forget that judgment is coming to the earth dear friends. Let us see the "types" of the Old Testament and remember the coming "anti-types:"
  - a. *Rev 20:12-15 ESV And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. (13) And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. (14) Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. (15) And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.*
3. Even though Jerusalem was "surrounded by armies," many still escaped when they remembered and heeded Christ's warning.
  - a. Josephus chronicles a sudden and unexplainable pull back from the Temple area of a Roman general, "without any just occasion in the world." Many were able to flee.
  - b. *Mat 24:16 ESV then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.*
  - c. There was literally a mountain area called "Pella about 60 miles from Jerusalem that became a refuge for many Christians." –Gary Demar

#### **Verses 17-18**

1. The Lord cried out for those who would experience, and I use this word purposely, the "tribulation" of those days.
2. In warnings for disobedience centuries before 70AD, God said...
  - a. *Deu 28:52-53 ESV "They shall besiege you in all your towns, until your high and fortified walls, in which you trusted, come down throughout all your land. And they shall besiege you in all your towns throughout all your land, which the LORD your God has given you. (53) And you shall eat the fruit of your womb, the flesh of your sons and daughters, whom the LORD your God has given you, in the siege and in the distress with which your enemies shall distress you.*
3. During the Babylonian invasion beginning around 599 BC...
  - a. *Lam 4:9-10 ESV Happier were the victims of the sword than the victims of hunger, who wasted away, pierced by lack of the fruits of the field. (10) The hands of compassionate women have boiled their own children; they became their food during the destruction of the daughter of my people.*
4. Luke gives us a warning by Christ...
  - a. *Luk 19:41-44 ESV And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, (42) saying, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. (43) For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in*

*on every side (44) and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation."*

5. And Josephus helps us see just how much "tribulation" there was on women and children....
  - a. "There was one Mary, the daughter of Eleazar, illustrious for her family and riches. She having been stripped and plundered of all her substance and provisions by the soldiers, out of necessity and fury, killed her own sucking child, and, having boiled him, devoured half of him, and, covering up the rest, preserved it for another time. [12] The soldiers soon came, allured by the smell of victuals, and threatened to kill her immediately, if she would not produce what she had dressed. But she replied that she had reserved a good part for them, and uncovered the relics of her son. Dread and astonishment seized them, and they stood stupified at the sight." –Thomas Newton, 1754

*Luk 23:27-30 ESV And there followed him a great multitude of the people and of women who were mourning and lamenting for him. (28) But turning to them Jesus said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. (29) For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!' (30) Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us,' and to the hills, 'Cover us.'*

**May we all live with the realization that a "final-future" judgment is coming...and may we preach the Gospel with love and passion...for that judgment is even worse than what we have read today, for those who do not know Christ, for it is eternal.**

Amen.